

Voluntary Alternative Discipline

Voluntary alternative discipline provides employees and supervisors another option other than traditional discipline. Traditional discipline, frequently leads to undesirable emotional side effects which can sometimes as easily become associated with the supervisor as with the unacceptable behavior. Often times the disciplined employee does not accept responsibility and does not agree the behavior warranted discipline. If the employee maintains this attitude no change in behavior will occur.

Voluntary alternative discipline is designed to change the behavior of employees, not penalize them. It offers supervisors ways of dealing with employees displaying unacceptable behavior directly and at an early stage. It minimizes disruption of the organization and empowers employees in the decision making process concerning their own discipline. The agreed upon discipline may include remedies broader than what might be issued in a formal disciplinary action. The process may actually strengthen the relationship between the supervisor and the employee. The single biggest difference between alternative discipline and other disciplinary methods is that when there are problems, the focus of attention is on the future and not on the past.

Employees facing proposed reprimands or suspensions without pay may request alternative discipline. Supervisors maintain the right to consider the employees request or proceed with traditional discipline. The supervisor in coordination with the EMCBC, Office of Human Resources may approve alternative discipline if applicable to the offense.

The employee will sign a discipline agreement prepared by the supervisor and approved by the Office of Human Resources. The discipline agreement will include:

- a. Employee's admission of fault or wrongdoing;
- b. Employee's commitment to improve future conduct;
- c. Acknowledgment of the penalty being replaced;
- d. Statement that future offenses will result in more severe discipline;
- e. Employee's waiver of grievance or appeal rights.

Supervisors have a full range of penalties to choose from including but not limited to reduced suspensions, financial restitution, community service and donations of leave. The employee and supervisor must agree on the penalty and have the agreement approved by the Office of Human Resources within ten calendar days. The employer will not endure any financial obligations as a result of any voluntary alternative discipline agreement. The agreement will remain in the employees Official Personnel Folder for up to two (2) years.

Employees and management may benefit from alternative discipline because there will be less workdays lost due to suspensions, improved productivity, heightened morale, reduced grievances and EEO complaints. If you want to learn more about voluntary alternative discipline, please contact the EMCBC, Office of Human Resources.